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THE OBSERVATOR.

The Proteſtation of the Lower Houſe of Convocation, deliver'd to the Arch-Biſhop the 30th of April *laſt. Remarks thereon. The Temper and Practices of the high-flying Clergy. A Story from* St. Giles's.

From Wednesday, May 21. to Saturday, May 24. 1707.

Country-m. MAſter, you have a long Time promis'd to give me the Meaning of the *Proteſtation* of the Lower Houſe of *Convocation*, which their *Prolocutor* deliver'd to the Arch-Biſhop; pray now, Sir, give me the Meaning of it.

Obſ. That is, if I can. However, *Roger*, read it.

Country-m. This is it that I find in the *Daily-Courant* of Thurſday, *May* 1. Numb. 1626.

"WE the Dignitaries and Clergy of the "Lower Houſe of Convocation, deſiring, as "we are in Duty bound, to maintain, as "much as in us lies, the Rights of the Regal "Supremacy; do hereby proteſt againſt all "manner of Proceedings had or to be had af-"ter the 10th of this Inſtant *April*, in a cer-"tain Cauſe of *Contumacy*, commenc'd on the "ſaid Day, in the Upper Houſe of Convoca-"tion, and thence to this Day, *viz.* the 30th "Day of *April*, continu'd: As alſo againſt a-"ny Sentence whatever in the ſaid Cauſe de-"creed, or to be decreed after the 10th Day of "*April*. Which Proceedings and Sentence we "do, *by Reaſon of the Prorogation of the Convoca-"tion made by the Authority of the Royal Writ on "the ſaid 10th Day of* April, conceive to be de-"rogatory to the Rights of the Queen's Su-"premacy, unlawful, and altogether null."

Obſ. Indeed, *Roger*, I can't well tell what to ſay to this Proteſtation. I find (if we may relye upon this Proteſt) that the Convocation was prorogu'd by the Queen's Writ on the 10th of *April*. But the Dignitaries (as they call themſelves) of the Lower Houſe of Convocation, don't tell us to what Time they were prorogu'd. Now, if they were prorogu'd *ſine Die*, without any Day appointed for their meeting again, in my Opinion, this is a clear *Diſſolution*: And 'tis the ſame in Parliament, if they are prorogu'd, nay, if they adjourn themſelves *ſine Die*, I don't ſee how they can meet again, without new Authority from the Crown.

I find alſo, by the Proteſt, that the Upper Houſe of Convocation did meet ſince the 10th of *April*, in a Cauſe of *Contumacy*; I know not what that ſhould be, but to conſider the Inſolence of the inferior Clergy; and this Action, they ſay, is contrary to the Rights of the Regal Supremacy. Now, if it be a Crime in the Upper Houſe, to meet after the Prorogation in a Cauſe of Contumacy; is it not the ſame in the Lower Houſe, to meet after that Time, to draw up this Proteſtation? Unleſs being ſhrew'd Men, they can prove, that the 30th Day of *April* is before the 10th Day of the ſame Month.

But obſerve, *Roger*, they are Men of Diſpatch; they deliver'd their Proteſtation to the Arch-Biſhop on the 30th of *April*, and got it into the *Courant* the 1ſt of *May*, the Day of *Union*, which might ſerve as an Information to the People, That tho' the two Kingdoms are united, the two Houſes of Convocation are at Odds.

But now, *Roger*, I can't help Laughing, when they tell us they are in Duty bound to maintain the Rights of the *Regal Supremacy*. Hold faſt behind, good *Roger*. To hear them talk of a Loyalty, is as ſtrange a Sound, as to hear the *Scots* Cannon ſay *UNION*.

Roger, hold up thy Head; don't laugh all, but hearken a little: How many of the Lower Houſe of Convocation ſaddl'd their *Hobbies*, and rode up and down the Countries, to make Intereſt againſt the Queen's Friends at the Elections? How many of 'em voted for the Tackers, and ſuch as hated the Queen and Government? Have not the inferior Clergy, in their *Caſſandra's*, their *New Aſſociations*, their *Wolfs ſtrip'd*, &c. ſet the Clergy above the Queen in the Eccleſiaſtical Juriſdiction? And was not the Prieſts Paw viſible in that ſcandalous Libel, call'd the *Memorial*? And now they talk of maintaining the Queen's *Supremacy*! What a Reformation is here!

Country-m. Pray, Maſter, by the by, who are theſe Convocation-men, this black Parliament, choſen by?

Obſ. They are choſen by the Clergy of the County.

Country-m. If they are choſen after that manner, then they are ſpecial good Ones. But, Maſter, to ſpeak plainly, I don't approve of that Election.

Obſ. 'Tis no matter whether you approve of it, or no; 'tis the Cuſtom ſo to do.

Country-m. You have imprinted a Maxim in my Mind, which is this, *Whatſoever is contrary to* Reaſon, *is contrary to* Law, *and is binding upon no Body.*

Obſ. Well, what of that in this Caſe?

Country-m. Is it Reaſon that the Clergy ſhould chuſe their own Repreſentatives, and ours too? And is it not reaſonable, if the Clergy vote among us at Elections for Members of Parliament, that we ſhould vote with them, for Members of Convocation?

Obſ. Roger, I think 'tis highly reaſonable; or otherwiſe, if the Laity are debarr'd from voting with them for Members of Convocation, they ought alſo to be debarr'd from voting for Members of Parliament.

But,

But, ſay they, we repreſent the Church, and ought to be choſen only by Church-men: The Members of Parliament may ſo ſay, That they repreſent the Laity, and ought to be choſen only by Lay-men. But I deny, that the Convocation does repreſent the Church; 'tis the Parliament does repreſent the Church, whoſe Creature it is, for the Eccleſiaſtical Sanction is deriv'd from the *Parliament*, and not from *Convocation*; from the *Laity*, and not from the *Clergy*. The Houſe of Commons does not barely repreſent the Perſons of the People, but their Liberties alſo; they are the *Guardians* of the Peoples free Birth-rights, the *Conſervators* of the Peoples Laws, under which all and ſingular do claim Franchiſe, and the Church of *England*, as by Law eſtabliſh'd, holding from the Law; the Parliament, who are the Guardians of that Law, do repreſent her, as well as the Laity, for the Priviledges of all, have the ſame Foundation. And *Matthew Paris* ſays, That the *Communitas totius Regni* is repreſented in Parliament; Church, as well as Laity; thoſe that have no Right of voting, as well as thoſe that have; All, and every One.

Country-m. But, Maſter, I would fain have the Point detemin'd, whether the *Parſons* have a Right to vote at Elections? I would not have 'em vote, I proteſt, for they are the Make-bates, and generally begin the Riots at Elections.

Obſ. I have given you my Opinion in that Caſe already, and that Point will never be adjuſted, 'till it comes under the Conſideration of Parliament; and when that will be, I can't tell.

Country-m. I can't imagine why ſome of our Prieſts are ſo very peeviſh, and clamorous, who has injur'd 'em? What Priviledge they ever enjoy'd, are they depriv'd off? Thoſe of 'em that have conform'd to the Government, are in Poſſeſſion of their Livings; and thoſe of 'em that refuſe to take the Oaths, 'tis long of themſelves that they are outed; for 'tis inconſiſtent with the Prudence of any Government to admit Perſons to Offices, either in *Church* or *State*, that will not ſubmit themſelves to the *Civil* and *Eccleſiaſtical* Government of the Kingdom. They would think it hard to have the Preſbyterians admitted into the Church-Offices, becauſe there is a Law againſt it; and is there not a Law excluding them alſo? I can't tell what to make of theſe high-flying Clergymen; they are the moſt diſcontented People in the Univerſe; they are pleas'd neither full nor faſting.

Obſ. One Thing, *Roger*, would make them the moſt eaſy People in the World; and without it, nothing will do; that is, to let 'em have again a ſanguinary Power, an Eccleſiaſtical Tyranny, that they might ſtarve the Bodies of the Diſſenters in Priſon, while the free-Booters of High-Church run away with their Goods, and live upon the Spoils of their Eſtates, as they did in the Reign of King *Charles* the II. What was the Meaning of their *Occaſional Bill*, and the *Tack*, but to bring this about again, and to affront the Queen, and her Government?

We may talk of the Papiſts perſecuting the Proteſtants; but what have they done, that our High-Church-men would not do, if it were in their Power, and they were ſupported by the ſecular Arm, as the Papiſts are? We ſhould then have as many Gibbits as Pulpits, and more Executions than Sermons, could High-Church obtain its Point.

Far be it from me to be cenſorious, or falſely to accuſe any Party, but when their Practices are brought in Evidence, as indeed the Practices of the High-flyers may be inſtanc'd in every Reign. No Reflection or Calumny can interpoſe, to ſet aſide real Matter of Fact.

I will give you one Inſtance of the Candour of that Party, a modern one of a late Date, one Mr. *B——r*, a Reader at ſome Church near *St. Giles's in the Fields*, being a great Crony with one Mr. *B—n*, a Brewer at that Place; being at Mr. *B——n*'s one Day, after the reverend and learned Mr. *Glaſcock*, the Non-conforming Miniſter, was dead, ſcoffingly ſaid to a Perſon there preſent, *Your Father* Glaſcock *is dead, and there is a great Rout among the* Preſbyterians.

Some time ſince Mr. *B—r* and his Wife, with the ſaid *Reader*, was at a Diſtiller's Houſe in *High Holborn*, at a merry Meeting; there happen'd to be in the Houſe the Pictures of Mr. *Mead*, and Mr. *Baxter*, two eminent Miniſters, whom the Diſtiller's Wife could not endure. When they were merry, or rather mad with *Punch*, ſhe brought the Pictures to the *Reader*, who aſk'd *her what he muſt do with them*; ſhe anſwer'd, *Burn them for Popes*: So he immediately committed Mr. *Mead*'s Picture to the Flames; and the next Day this Woman ſaid to one at her Houſe, that *they had brave Sport laſt Night.*

Country-m. Maſter, I don't queſtion but they would treat the Bodies of the Diſſenting Miniſters, as they do their Pictures, if it were in their Power. Oh my Soul! enter not thou into their Secrets, for they are cruel, and delight in Blood. But what an impotent Malice and Revenge is it to burn the Shadow of one, who is now a glorious Saint above, out of the Reach of Men and Devils? All the Harm I wiſh ſuch malicious Wretches, is, that when they die, their immortal Souls may be in the ſame happy State with Mr. *Mead's*, who was an eminent Inſtrument in God's Hand, of ſhowing many the Way to eternal Bliſs, before he quitted this earthly Tabernacle, and aſcended thither himſelf.

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